

Serial No.: 09/662,463
Docket No.: 60655.7600

REMARKS

Applicants reply to the Final Office Action dated September 1, 2005 within two months. Thus, Applicants request an Advisory Action, if necessary. The Examiner rejected claims 1-26, 28, 30, and 32 pending in the application. Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, Applicants amend claims 1, 8, 13, and 20, and cancel claims 4, 16, and 23, without conceding the associated rejections and without prejudice to the filing of one or more related applications containing the claimed subject matter. Support for the amended claims may be found in the originally filed specification, and thus, no new matter is added by this amendment. Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1-3, 5-15, 17-22, 24-26, 28, 30, and 32 (4 independent claims; 26 total claims) remain pending in the application. Applicants request reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejects claims 1-26, 28, 30 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Taufique, WO 01/20518 A1 ("Taufique") in view of Lauffer, U.S. Patent No. 6,223,165 B1 ("Lauffer"), and in further view of DeLorme et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,948,040 ("DeLorme"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Taufique generally discloses a system for providing communication between experts and end-users over a network. Taufique teaches a system including a database where experts and expert credentials may be stored. An end user interfacing with the system may enter a question which is then used to search the database in order to identify an expert possessing expertise relating to the question. The Taufique system then routes the question to the identified expert, and when answered, the question and answer are stored in a database. A different end-user subsequently submitting a similar question would then be issued a previously-stored answer from the database, thereby bypassing the step of transmitting the question to the expert to again answer the question.

Taufique is limited to a unique configuration of a "help" utility as is frequently employed in current web sites. Many product web sites offer their customers several options for obtaining help which may include, for example, a frequently asked questions web page, a knowledge base and a live help link. A frequently asked questions (FAQ) web page is usually compiled from a database of previously asked and answered questions. This usually requires an end user to review a list of questions to find one similar to their own. A knowledge base is very similar to a FAQ, although it usually requires the end-user to enter a specific question which is used to automatically conduct a database search for similar questions which have been previously answered.

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Because the Taufique system is limited to answering questions from an end user, Taufique does not include proposing an itinerary or offering to book reservations for a proposed itinerary. As such, Taufique does not disclose or suggest at least "a proposed itinerary relating to the customer request, wherein the proposed itinerary is based upon the particular knowledge of the destination expert related to the destination city, and wherein the destination expert response further includes an offer to book reservations for the proposed itinerary," as similarly recited by amended independent claims 1, 8, 13 and 20.

Applicants assert that Claims 1, 8, 13 and 20 are differentiated from Lauffer and DeLorme for at least the same reasons as presented above in reference to Taufique. Moreover, the Examiner correctly asserts that "Taufique, Lauffer, and Delorme fail to expressly disclose wherein the destination expert can communicate a response and wherein the destination expert response includes an offer to book reservations relating to the request." (page 6).

Dependent claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9-12, 14, 15, 17-19, 21, 22, 24-26, 28, 30 and 32 variously depend from independent claims 1, 8, 13 and 20. As such, dependent claims 2, 3, 5-7, 9-12, 14, 15, 17-19, 21, 22, 24-26, 28, 30 and 32 are allowable for at least the reasons described above with respect to independent claims 1, 8, 13 and 20, as well as in view of their own respective features.

In view of the above remarks and amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims properly set forth that which Applicants regard as their invention and are allowable over the cited references. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the Examiner's convenience, if that would help further prosecution of the subject Application. Applicants authorize and respectfully request that any fees due be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-2814.

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Respectfully submitted,

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